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EDUCATION COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

Re: Raised Bill No. 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

As an elementary educator, and graduate student specializing in reading and language development and remediation of reading disorders, I appreciate the significance of Raised Bill No. 317 and am writing today to share my support for this critically important piece of proposed legislation for future teacher candidates. I speak today on behalf of my colleagues who are engaging in this experience with me.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the Committee to consider the literacy needs of those children for whom this bill will directly impact. Understanding the complexity of the Dyslexia diagnosis and other specific learning disabilities requires more than a single course to adequately prepare specialists to address the needs of students with Dyslexia. Candidates who pursue a remedial reading certification (102) require a specialized sequence of instruction that addresses Dyslexia because being able to teach from an explicit, systematic perspective while also using data to drive instruction takes time and practice.

Upon completion of my 6th year program, I will have experienced courses in evidence based general education literacy interventions, assessment and diagnosis, and remediation as well be involved in a supervised clinical experience. Despite having an advanced degree, I am only now learning about the depth and skill that is required to effectively serve students' literacy needs from a scientific, research based orientation. It takes time and practice to be able to plan and deliver instruction from a systematic, explicit orientation.

Too often, children with identified disabilities that impact their reading profiles are not provided with adequately intensive remedial reading interventions. For these students, their literacy gaps are too great and require dedicated instruction. This is why it is important to consider how future teacher candidates and specialists are being prepared to meet the needs of these students.

I do hope that the Education Committee will add language to Raised Bill No. 317 that helps to ensure that educators providing remedial reading instruction are afforded the opportunity to receive an adequately sequenced, multi-layered, and meaningful course of instruction that will prepare them to provide intensive, individualized, scientifically-based reading interventions settings.

I thank you for your commitment to supporting the diverse literacy needs of Connecticut's children.

Sincere regards,

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